

News Release
U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
District of Rhode Island



November 6, 2006

**Four are charged in alleged plan
to smuggle guns to Guatemala**

Four allegedly illegal aliens have been charged with possessing guns that they intended to ship to Guatemala. The four, who are from Guatemala, were arrested on November 3 after they bought two rifles and three pistols, including a fully automatic Mac 11, from an undercover Warwick Police detective.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente and Thomas H. Wlodyka, Resident Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, announced a federal complaint, which was lodged on November 3 in U.S. District Court, Providence.

Charged are: **Carlos Vargas**, 44, **Juan Orellana**, 34, **Vilma Morales**, 40, and **Bernardo Rojas**, 48, all of Providence. They appeared today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Lincoln D. Almond, who ordered them detained.

According to an affidavit supporting the complaint, an ATF agent developed information in September that an illegal alien wanted to buy firearms and export them to Guatemala. Working through a licensed firearms dealer where the alien allegedly had initially wanted to buy the guns, an undercover Warwick detective arranged a meeting with the alien.

On October 13, the undercover detective met with Vargas and two companions, later identified as Orellana and Morales. They ordered a variety of weapons: two .22 caliber rifles, a Mac11, nine millimeter fully automatic pistol, and two nine millimeter semi-automatic pistols.

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On November 3, according to the affidavit, the undercover detective met with Vargas, Orellana, Morales, and Rojas. The detective sold Vargas two .22 caliber rifles for \$250. He sold Orellana a Beretta nine millimeter semi-automatic pistol for \$500. The detective gave a Mac 11, nine millimeter fully automatic pistol to Morales and was paid \$425 by Rojas, who was later identified as Morales' husband. He then sold Rojas a Beretta nine millimeter pistol for \$500.

After Vargas, Orellana, Morales, and Rojas, took possession of the weapons, Immigration and ATF agents arrested them. Further investigation revealed that none of the four individuals is a documented alien, that all four are from Guatemala and that they intended to ship the guns to Guatemala.

The complaint charges all four with being illegal aliens in possession of firearms. The charge is a felony and therefore subject to review by a federal grand jury. A complaint is merely an allegation and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Warwick Police investigated the case. The Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations provided assistance. Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter F. Neronha is prosecuting it.

-30-

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